



Panama Research Guide

ANCESTOR'S BIRTH LOCATION UNKNOWN

FamilySearch Indexed Records: Try searching in the indexed records for the name of your ancestor if they were born before Try a variety of searches with your ancestor's name, or with the parent's names, or just by the parent's surnames AND using the option to limit locality by the country "Panama" and the name of the province, if known. If there are no results, you will need to find more information from home sources or by asking family members.

Contact Family Members: If you do not have even a minimal amount of information AND have no idea of where and when to look, you need to contact family members who might have that information. This could be older aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.

ANCESTOR'S BIRTH LOCATION AND NAMES OF PARENTS, SPOUSE, OR CHILDREN ARE KNOWN

FamilySearch Indexed Records: Try searching first in indexed records as described above.

US Census Records, 1920-1940: For those living in the Canal Zone between 1920-1940, use the US census to learn more information about the ancestor.

FamilySearch Browseable Images: If there are no results from the previous search for the ancestor or any siblings, you will have to browse images for the locality. There are no Civil Registration records available for Panama. You will need to rely on Catholic Church records. On the **Search** page, click the **Central American** portion of the map then select **Panama** from the list of countries. Select a record collection from **Image-Only Historical Records** and browse the collection page-by-page for your ancestor.

FamilySearch Catalog: Not all records for Panama are online, be sure to check the catalog before giving up on finding records. Under **Search** on the home page select **Catalog**. Type **Panama** and click **Search**. A list of available records will appear. Your search can be localized by selecting **Places within Panama** at the top and then choosing the exact locality where your ancestor lived.

RESEARCH STRATEGIES

Who to Search For? If you don't know the names of the parents, but you know the name of the spouse and/or the names of some of his children, begin with a marriage search (if they married in Paraguay and you know the place). Or begin with a search for the baptism record for one of their children (if you have an approximate birthdate and place).

FamilySearch Wiki: Translation, handwriting help, and descriptions of specific record collections can be found on the FamilySearch Wiki. Under **Search** on the home page select

Research Wiki. Type **Panama** into the search bar and press **Enter**. The information on this page will lead you to helpful topics such as **Languages** (under Panama Background) as well as beginning research suggestions.

FamilySearch Community: You can get immediate research and handwriting help from a community of researchers through the FamilySearch Communities. Go to <http://community.familysearch.org/> and click **Groups**. Search for **Latin American Genealogy Research** or **Investigación Genealógica** to find the group for Hispanic genealogical research. While the second group is in Spanish, the members will respond to posts written in English. On the group pages, you can post research questions and upload documents to get translation help.

FINDING A LOCALITY

For help locating a place in Panama, try the following sources:

- Google
- Wikipedia (Spanish version works the best)
- Try a keyword search in the FamilySearch Catalog for **Panama Gazetteers**.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Panama, Genealogy.com: www.genealogy.com/forum/regional/countries/topics/panama/

Panama Genealogy Research:

www.en.geneanet.org/pays/research-genealogy-ancestry-Panama-PAN

Panama Historical Records: www.surnames.meaning-of-names.com/genealogy/panama/

The Panama Genealogy and FamilyTree Page:

www.genealogytoday.com/surname/finder.mv?Surname=Panama

Looking for an Ancestor in the Canal Zone:

www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2007/fall/panama.html

For other online resources please review the Wiki article **Hispanic Genealogy Resources Online**.